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| 09/836,512 | 04/17/2001 | Helen J. Chemtob | P-6175PROV | 6586 |

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EXAMINER

CHOU DHURY, AZIZUL Q

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| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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2145

DATE MAILED: 11/05/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/836,512

Applicant(s)

CHEMTOB, HELEN J.

Examiner

Azizul Choudhury

Art Unit

2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 4/17/2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-43 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 17 April 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____

Detailed Action

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17-24, 28-36, and 40-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kato et al (US Pat No: US 20010002831 A1), hereinafter referred to as Kato.

1. With regards to claim 1, Kato teaches a server for communicating content between a group of networked client computers over a communications medium and displaying communications flows identifying a content originator and a content receiver, said server comprising: a memory a processor storing and retrieving instructions from said memory; a network interface operably connecting said processor to the communications medium; a communications module receiving content from an originating computer and transmitting said content to at least one target computer; a graphical communication flow module integrated with said communications module to and providing to each of the client computers a graphical representation of the group of networked computers, said graphical communication flow module graphically depicting communication flows showing the originating and target

computer(s) corresponding to each content transmission by said communications interface (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (communication modules) as claimed (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

2. With regards to claims 2 and 30, Kato teaches the server, wherein said communications module transmits content selected from the group comprising voice, video and text (Kato's design allows for video (paragraph 47, Kato), voice and text (paragraph 41, Kato) means for communication).

3. With regards to claims 3 and 31, Kato teaches the server, further comprising: a voice communications monitor having a plurality of voice communication flags, one said flag corresponding to each client computer, only one said flag being active at any given time; said communications module verifying a status of said plurality of voice communication flags in response to a voice content transmission request for a given client computer, and activating said corresponding voice communication flag if none of said voice communication flags is active, said communications interface processing voice content transmission requests only from a client computer whose corresponding voice communication flag is active (Kato's design allows the users to view through the GUI, the status (equivalent to the claimed flag) of the users (paragraph 45, Kato)).

4. With regards to claims 4 and 32, Kato teaches the server, further comprising: a voice communication flag reset module for resetting said voice communication flags a timer module triggers said flag reset module to reset said voice communications flags after a predetermined time interval (Kato's design allows for the status to be refreshed (paragraph 45, Kato)).

5. With regards to claims 5 and 33, Kato teaches the server, wherein said timer module includes a timer over-ride function for re-starting said predetermined time interval (Kato's design has means for a timer with refresh means (paragraph 45, Kato)).

6. With regards to claims 6 and 34, Kato teaches the server, wherein said graphical communication flow module graphically depicts each client computer using at least one of a dynamic video image received from said client computer and a still image (Kato's design makes use of a GUI which has the means to depict each client computer (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

7. With regards to claims 7 and 35, Kato teaches the server, further comprising: a library of feedback responses including at least one of text and graphic icons and sound clips; and a feedback communications module communicating feedback responses to said graphical communication flow module, such that transmission of a feedback response from an originating client to a target client is visible to all of the networked client computers, said originating client providing feedback to the target client by selecting a feedback response from said library of feedback responses and sending said selected feedback response using said feedback communications module (Kato's design features a GUI for each user where they are able to receive information regarding the other users (Figure 6, Kato). This GUI illustrates the use of text and graphic feedback. In addition, Kato discloses that voice (sound) means are present in the design (paragraph 41, Kato)).

8. With regards to claims 8 and 36, Kato teaches the server, further comprising: a feedback response editor for creating feedback responses and storing said custom feedback responses in said feedback response library (Kato's disclosure illustrates in Figure 6, that a user on vacation has left a message informing the other users of the vacation. Hence, Kato's design has the means by which to store responses. In addition, Kato's design allows for chatting (paragraph 41, Kato) hence, means are present for allowing users to edit and create feedback responses with).

9. With regards to claim 9, Kato teaches the server, wherein said graphical communication flow module depicts communication flows by varying visual characteristics of a graphic identifying the originating client and the sending client (Kato's design allows for chatting which conform to IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato). IRC chats provide means for varying visual traits of the graphic identifying each participant of the chat).

10. With regards to claim 10, Kato teaches that the server, comprising: a virtual meeting room module providing at least one of open membership virtual meeting rooms and restricted membership meeting rooms, access to said restricted membership meeting rooms being limited to select ones of the client computers; said communications interface being integrated with said virtual meeting room module and facilitating communications between client computers accessing a given said virtual meeting room (Kato's design allows for chatting which conform to IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato). IRC chats provide means for having private or open chats).

11. With regards to claims 14 and 40, Kato teaches the server, comprising: a scheduler containing a directory of discussions occurring in said virtual meeting rooms, said scheduler managing registration for said discussions (Kato's design provides GUIs to inform users about the members within the online community and their status. In addition, the GUIs provide information regarding time, vacant rooms and occupied rooms (Figures 6 and 7, Kato). In addition, the design allows for the usage of IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato). IRC chats provide means for having private or open meetings).

12. With regards to claim 15, Kato teaches a virtual office system, comprising: a server computer having a nonvolatile storage medium; a plurality of client computers connected to said server computer via a communications medium; a graphical interface for displaying data to said client computers; a virtual floorplan stored on said nonvolatile storage medium and defining a plurality of virtual offices, said virtual floorplan being displayed by said graphical interface; a scheduler storing scheduling information on said nonvolatile storage medium for scheduling said plurality of virtual offices, said scheduling information

including a directory identifying a time, meeting identification information, and virtual office information uniquely identifying a given said virtual office, said scheduling information being displayed by said graphical interface; a communications interface transmitting content from an originating client computer to at least one destination client computer; a graphical communication flow module graphically depicting to each client computer a representation of each of the participants of the meeting, said graphical communication flow module graphically depicting communication flows to all of the client computers showing the originating and destination client of content transmitted by the communications interface (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato). Plus, the design follows the IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato) and allows for chat and voice chat means (paragraph 41, Kato). Thus, the design has the claimed communications interface and graphical communication module allowing for and illustrating the conversation between participants. In addition, the GUIs provide information regarding time, vacant rooms and occupied rooms (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

13. With regards to claim 17, Kato teaches the virtual office system further comprising: an access control module restricting access to a selected virtual office; and an access request module for requesting access into said selected virtual office (Kato's design allows for the usage of IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato). IRC chats provide means for having private or open meetings).

14. With regards to claim 18, Kato teaches a method for conducting on-line training using a server computer connected to a plurality of client computers, comprising: providing a virtual meeting room on the server computer which is accessible to the client computers; graphically depicting a representation the virtual meeting room and each of the client computer users accessing the virtual meeting room; communicating content from an originating client computer to at least one target client computer using a messaging interface; graphically depicting to each of the client computers a communications flow

showing the originating and target client computer(s) of content transmitted by said messaging interface; and providing a simultaneous access window for displaying presentation materials to each of the client computers accessing the virtual room; and facilitating a structured discussion using the messaging system and the presentation materials displayed in the simultaneous access window (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (communication modules) as claimed (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

15. With regards to claim 19, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing a presentation materials editor and a memory on the server for editing and storing presentation materials for an on-line training seminar (Kato's design allows multiuser gaming (paragraph 44, Kato). With multiuser gaming, a server stores a game and allows users to interact with the game at a later time. In addition, multiuser games allow for user unique data to be stored (editing). Since multiuser games exist within the design, means are present for online training as well within Kato's design. In addition, Kato's design allows for video news rooms (Figure 6, Kato). This aspect of the design is also equivalent to the claimed online tutorial).

16. With regards to claim 20, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing a library of feedback responses, wherein an originating client may select a given feedback response and specify a target client, and said messaging interface communicates the feedback response to the target client (Kato's design features a GUI for each user where they are able to receive information regarding the other users (Figure 6, Kato). This GUI illustrates the use of text and graphic feedback. In addition, Kato discloses that voice (sound) means are present in the design (paragraph 41, Kato)).

17. With regards to claim 21, Kato teaches the method further comprising: providing a feedback response editor for creating custom feedback responses (Kato's disclosure illustrates in Figure 6, that a user on vacation has left a message informing the other users of the vacation. Hence, Kato's design has

the means by which to store responses. In addition, Kato's design allows for chatting (paragraph 41, Kato) hence, means are present for allowing users to edit and create feedback responses with).

18. With regards to claim 22, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing a resource directory containing literature reviews related to the on-line training topic (Kato's design provides options to select from (equivalent to the claimed directory) different rooms such as meeting rooms and news rooms (Figure 6, Kato). This is equivalent to the claimed resource directory).

19. With regards to claim 23, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing an on-line workbook containing a series of exercises, said exercises including at least one of individual and group training exercises (Kato's design allows for multiuser gaming (paragraph 44, Kato). Since multiuser gaming is possible within Kato's design, means exist for group training exercises within Kato's design).

20. With regards to claim 24, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing a list of on-line group prompt statements which are delivered to the group by one of a group leader and a group member to the group using the messaging system (Kato's design allows for the use of IRC (paragraph 43, Kato)).

21. With regards to claim 28, Kato teaches the method comprising: recording messages and communications flows; and selectively replaying said messages in conjunction with redisplaying said 4 communications flows (Kato's design allows for voice chatting means (paragraph 41, Kato). In addition, the design allows for graphical representations of communication flows when it allows for chatting (paragraphs 41 and 43, Kato). Since voice chatting means are present, means are also present for recording voices).

22. With regards to claim 29, Kato teaches n internet web site residing on a host and providing a structured communications environment for a plurality of client computers, said internet web site comprising: a graphical interface displaying a plurality of virtual meeting rooms, a given virtual meeting

room being simultaneously accessible to selected ones of the client computers; a communications interface receiving content from an originating client computer and displaying said content to at least one destination client computer; said graphical interface displaying within each virtual meeting room a representation of the client computers accessing said corresponding virtual meeting room; said graphical interface graphically depicting communication flows showing the originating and destination client computer(s) corresponding to each content transmission by said communications interface (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato). Plus, the design follows the IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato) and allows for chat and voice chat means (paragraph 41, Kato). Thus, the design has the claimed communications interface and graphical interface allowing for and illustrating the conversation between participants. In addition, the GUIs provide information regarding time, vacant rooms and occupied rooms (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

23. With regards to claim 41, Kato teaches a memory medium storing software for a communications system, comprising: a graphical interface for displaying a plurality of virtual meeting rooms, a given virtual meeting room being simultaneously accessible to selected ones of the client computers; a communications interface for receiving content from an originating client computer and displaying said content to at least one destination client computer; said graphical interface displaying within each virtual meeting room a representation of the client computers accessing said corresponding virtual meeting room; said graphical interface graphically depicting communication flows showing the originating and destination client computer(s) corresponding to each content transmission by said communications interface (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato). Plus, the design follows the IRC standards (paragraph 43,

Kato) and allows for chat and voice chat means (paragraph 41, Kato). Thus, the design has the claimed communications interface and graphical interface allowing for and illustrating the conversation between participants. In addition, the GUIs provide information regarding time, vacant rooms and occupied rooms (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

24. With regards to claim 42, Kato teaches a method for providing on-line counseling using a server computer connected to a plurality of client computers, comprising: storing a roster of authorized participants on the server said roster including identification information specifying authorized client computers; providing a virtual meeting room on the server computer which is accessible to the authorized client computers; graphically depicting a representation of the virtual meeting room including a graphical representation of each of the authorized participants accessing the virtual meeting room; communicating content from an originating client to at least one target client using a messaging interface; graphically depicting to each of the clients a communications flow showing the originating and target client(s) of content transmitted by said messaging interface; storing presentation material on the server; providing a simultaneous access window for displaying the presentation materials to each of the authorized client computers accessing the virtual meeting room; and facilitating a structured discussion using the messaging interface and the presentation materials displayed in the simultaneous access window (Kato teaches a design for a virtual common space where various online users are able to meet and communicate. The design makes use of computers with network interface cards (Figure 4, Kato). In addition, Kato also discloses that the design makes use of a GUI for users to participate and view the uses by other users (Figures 6 and 7, Kato). Plus, the design follows the IRC standards (paragraph 43, Kato) and allows for chat and voice chat means (paragraph 41, Kato). Thus, the design has the claimed communications interface and graphical interface allowing for and illustrating the conversation between participants. Plus, the design must also store the claimed roster. In addition, the GUIs provide information regarding time, vacant rooms and occupied rooms (Figures 6 and 7, Kato)).

25. With regards to claim 43, Kato teaches the method comprising: providing a library of feedback responses, wherein a member may provide feedback by sending a feedback response from said library of feedback responses (Kato's design features a GUI for each user where they are able to receive information regarding the other users (Figure 6, Kato). This GUI illustrates the use of text and graphic feedback).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 11-13, 16, and 37-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al (US Pat No: US 20010002831 A1), in view of Colyer et al (US Pat No: US006151621A), hereafter referred to as Kato and Colyer, respectively.

26. With regards to claims 11 and 37, Kato teaches through Colyer the server, comprising: an email module providing email communications while simultaneously displaying said graphical communication flows

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato).

However, Kato fails to disclose the use of emails within the application aspect of the design.

Colyer discloses a design for a conferencing method (column 4, lines 14-15, Colyer). The design allows for communicating means by email (column 10, lines 19-22, Colyer).

Both Kato and Colyer teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it

would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of Colyer to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

27. With regards to claims 12, 16 and 38, Kato teaches through Colyer the server comprising: a shared documents window providing shared viewing access to one of a document and a video presentation, said shared documents window being integrated with said communications module and said graphical communication flow module such that a shared document may be viewed while simultaneously transmitting and receiving content and viewing communication flows

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato).

However, Kato fails to disclose the use of a shared document viewer within the application aspect of the design.

Colyer discloses a design for a conferencing method (column 4, lines 14-15, Colyer). The design allows for an online chalkboard application (column 8, lines 25-32, Colyer). The online chalkboard viewer is a shared document viewer.

Both Kato and Colyer teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of Colyer to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

28. With regards to claims 13 and 39, Kato teaches through Colyer, the server comprising: a virtual chalk board viewable to client computers accessing a given virtual meeting room; and a graphical editor facilitating drawing on said virtual chalkboard by client computers accessing said given virtual meeting room

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato).

However, Kato fails to disclose the use of a virtual chalkboard within the application aspect of the design.

Colyer discloses a design for a conferencing method (column 4, lines 14-15, Colyer). The design allows for an online chalkboard application (column 8, lines 25-32, Colyer).

Both Kato and Colyer teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of Colyer to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 25-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato et al (US Pat No: US 20010002831 A1), in view of MacNaughton et al (US Pat No: US005796393A), hereafter referred to as Kato and MacNaughton, respectively.

29. With regards to claim 25, Kato teaches through MacNaughton, the method comprising: providing a graphical ratings module which prompts members for a rating; providing statistical analysis of the responses; graphically displaying each member's response to the ratings prompt such that each member views the responses of all the members and the results of the statistical analysis

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato).

However, Kato fails to disclose means for rating within the design.

MacNaughton discloses a design for a community browser (column 3, lines 7-8, MacNaughton). The design allows for members to chat and vote (equivalent to the claimed rating) (column 3, lines 65-67, MacNaughton).

Both Kato and MacNaughton teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of MacNaughton to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

30. With regards to claim 26, Kato teaches through MacNaughton, the method comprising: providing a diagnostic assessment module prompting members to answer a series of diagnostic questions; and providing statistical analysis of each member's responses to the diagnostic questions

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato).

However, Kato fails to disclose means for diagnostic questions within the design.

MacNaughton discloses a design for a community browser (column 3, lines 7-8, MacNaughton). The design allows for members to chat and vote (column 3, lines 65-67, MacNaughton). Since voting means are present, it is inherent that means for diagnostic questions (or topics) be present within the design as well, with which to vote with.

Both Kato and MacNaughton teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of MacNaughton to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

31. With regards to claim 27, Kato teaches through MacNaughton, the method comprising: tracking a number of messages sent and received by each member, and tracking a total duration of voice messages

transmitted and received by each member; and providing statistical analysis of each member's activity as measured by said number of messages and said total duration of voice messages

(Kato's design has means for mail transmissions within computers (paragraph 33, Kato). In addition, Kato's design has means for tracking time durations (Figure 7, Kato). However, Kato fails to disclose means for statistical analysis within the design.

MacNaughton discloses a design for a community browser (column 3, lines 7-8, MacNaughton). The design allows for members to chat and vote (column 3, lines 65-67, MacNaughton). Since voting means are present, it is inherent that means for statistical analysis and tracking the number of messages is also present within the design.

Both Kato and MacNaughton teach designs that aid in conferencing. In addition, Kato states that various modifications are possible within the spirit and the scope of the design (paragraph 79, Kato). Hence it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art, during the time of the invention, to have combined the teachings of Kato with those of MacNaughton to provide a control apparatus of a virtual common space (paragraph 13, Kato)).

Conclusion

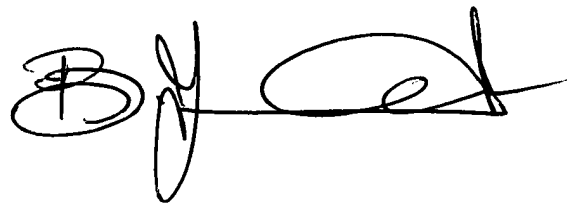
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Azizul Choudhury whose telephone number is 571-272-3909. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wiley can be reached on 571-272-3923. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2145

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

AC

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized, cursive letters that appear to read 'Bunjob Jaroenchonwanit'.

BUNJOB JAROENCHONWANIT
PRIMARY EXAMINER